



What is School Readiness?

School readiness refers to whether a child is ready to make an easy and successful transition into primary school.

Many skills contribute to school readiness and can impact a child's readiness to learn. Often, we quickly think of the academic skills, (such as counting to 10, writing their name) but there are other skills which are just as, or more important for a child to have before starting school such as emotional, social, language, self-care and motor skills.

A child also needs to have the maturity to go to school and ability to learn and follow the school routines!

School readiness is important to consider as some studies have shown that early success at school is a strong predictor of ongoing and future success (Prior et al, 1993).

Children's abilities when they start school can predict success in academic outcomes (Snow, 2006).

On the first day of 'big school' teachers want children to:

- understand spoken language and instructions
- express their thoughts, feelings and needs in words and sentences.





RECEPTIVE LANGUAGE

Before starting school we would generally expect children to be able to:

- o follow up to 3 step instructions in the same order (e.g. “put your hat in your bag, get out your lunch and sit on the floor”),
- o understand concepts such as size (big, little, tiny), quantity (all, except, one, two...etc..), comparatives (same, different),
- o know prepositions e.g. ‘beside’, ‘between’, ‘on’, ‘under’,
- o recognise and group objects (e.g. a ‘bee’ and a ‘horse’ are both animals),
- o identify objects by function (e.g. scissors are used for cutting),
- o listen to stories and answer questions about it, e.g. inferential questions (such as ‘why?’, ‘what’s next?’),
- o sequence objects/events e.g. ‘first’, ‘last’,



EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE

Children starting school can:

- o usually speak in full sentences which are mostly grammatically correct,
- o use grammatical markers such as -ed for past tense (jumped),
-ing for present tense (jumping) -s for plurals (books),
- o use pronouns correctly e.g. he/she, his/her, yours/mine, theirs/ours,
- o use joining words such as ‘and’, ‘because’, ‘so’, ‘but’,
- o use a wide vocabulary,
- o tell stories with a beginning, middle, and end,
- o participate in news time,
- o maintain conversation with peers and adults,



SPEECH

- o By the age of five children should be able to produce the following sounds: h, w, y, m, n, p, b, t, d, k, g, f, l, sh, ch, j, s, z, r, v, blends (e.g. pl, tr, sk)
- o It is common for children to have difficulty producing the 'th' sound e.g. "fum" instead of "thumb"
- o Children starting school should be 100% intelligible by familiar and unfamiliar people.



This means that anybody should be able to understand the speech of your child.

FLUENCY

- o By the time a child starts school they should have fluent speech and not stutter. School-age kids who stutter are at risk of being bullied and teased. One study showed that more than 80% of children who stutter were bullied about their speech during primary school (Ezrati-Vinacour et al, 2001).



Early intervention is effective, so if your child is stuttering talk to a speech pathologist.



PRAGMATIC LANGUAGE / SOCIAL SKILLS

Children starting school should be able to:

- o work alongside peers without distraction
- o play cooperatively
- o follow rules of a game
- o take turns when requested
- o give and maintain eye contact to others
- o stay on topic in conversation



- o maintain attention
- o complete tasks with minimal support
- o naturally show interest in other kids
- o interact easily with other children
- o separate well from their parent or carer

LISTENING SKILLS

- o Listening skills are essential for school readiness.
- o Listening is more than being quiet.
- o Active listening involves, hearing and focusing attention, discriminating relevant from irrelevant information, controlling your attention, holding information in your memory and formulating evaluations and responses.





LISTENING SKILLS

- On average teachers ask 300–400 questions per day, 40% of a teacher’s talk time is spent asking and responding to questions, 50–60% of a students talk time is in response to questions and generally teachers wait time less than 1 sec for a response.
- With so many questions it is important that your child can listen actively to the teacher and come up with a answer in a short amount of time.

PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS / EARLY LITERACY SKILLS

Children starting school can usually:

- recognize their own name and are learning to write it,
- demonstrate same/different sound awareness e.g. are the sounds ‘p’ and ‘p’ the same? Are the sounds ‘b’ and ‘p’ the same?,
- link some letters with the sounds they represent e.g. m says “mmm”,
- identify words that rhyme e.g. does ‘cat’ and ‘spat’ rhyme?
- turn pages of a book independently,
- listen to a basic story,
- tell a basic story,
- recognise some letters and sounds (especially the letters in their first name),
- show interest in written words/texts,
- begin to have left-right orientation.





Things you can do to best prepare your child for big school next year:

- o When children start school the language demands increase.
- o Language is now used for new purposes: telling stories, asking questions, reporting their findings, giving and following instructions, explaining information and introducing themselves to new people.
- o It is important to involve your child in lots of talking and listening.

A few simple ways that you can do this include:

- o Turning off the TV during dinner – and instead use this time to talk about the day. Share your experiences with your child and ask them questions that can help structure their own story.
- o Teach new vocabulary by adding new words to the conversation, discussing what words or phrases mean, telling jokes or commenting on how and what people say.
- o Ask open ended questions to encourage your child to talk and express ideas. Such as ‘why’, ‘how’, etc.



- o Explain how words are connected. e.g. a crocodile and a bird are both animals.
- o Involve children in activities beyond immediate family – library, museum, zoo, and most importantly drive by your child’s new school regularly!
- o Play word and listening games to build vocabulary and expressive language, even something as simple as ‘What’s the first word you think of when I say ...’



Things you can do to best prepare your child for big school next year:

- o Point out the parts of the school, talk about how fun and exciting it will be!
- o Dress up in the school uniform!
- o Play pretend games! Pretend to buy food from the canteen. Pretend to borrow books from the library. Pretend to visit a sick bay or create a sick bay for the teddies.

To enhance your child's early literacy skills you can:

- o Clap out the beats/syllables in words, e.g. how many beats are in your child's name?,
- o Play "I Spy" with first sounds not letters, e.g. I'm thinking of something starting with the 'mmm' sound...
- o Talk about rhyme and introduce rhyming games,
- o Enjoy alliteration and tongue twister games, e.g. 'ants on the apple', 'Suzy snake slithers',
- o Make a regular time to read to your child every day.
- o Read a variety of books - picture books, information books, magazines, nursery rhymes, books that emphasize sounds.
- o Take time to talk about the book. Don't just read the words. e.g. Stop and predict what will happen next, ask your child to find objects in the picture, talk about and draw the best part of the story, what does the story remind them of?.





Things you can do to best prepare your child for big school next year:

- o Ask questions that probe understanding, e.g. What was the main problem in the story? or Why did the character do that? What would you have done?
- o Have fun with language and jokes.
- o Discuss the meanings of new and unusual words.
- o Reread familiar stories – your child can help you retell or act out the story.



Remember school is about learning! It is okay if your child can not do all of these things quite yet. Mastering these skills is what kindergarten is all about.

But if you expose your child to the areas discussed they have a greater chance of success when they do start at school!

ACCESSING SPEECH PATHOLOGY

We are a mobile speech pathology service providing home and school based visits. You do not need a referral to access speech pathology.

REBATES FOR SPEECH THERAPY SERVICES

Some families may be able to obtain a rebate towards the cost of speech therapy, including: private health insurance rebates. and Medicare rebates.

Please contact us for more information.